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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2007

In Today's Papers

Peshmerge Tightens Measures against the PKK
Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports the Kurdish regional administration in northern Iraq is tightening security measures against the PKK "in line with intelligence obtained from the Americans." The Peshmerge forces patrol Mount Kandil 24 hours a day and search all cars passing by in order to prevent food and equipment transfers to the PKK. Following the Turkish military operation in Iraq this weekend, Peshmerge are reinforced with heavy weapons, artillery and armored units. Mainstream Sabah, liberal Radikal and the leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet report the Turkish military buildup on the border with Iraq continues. Cumhuriyet predicts the Turkish military presence will be permanent in order to prevent future PKK infiltrations.

Editorial Commentary on Turkish Iraq Incursion
Cuneyt Ulsever wrote in the mainstream Hurriyet (12/4): "There are conflicting reports about the military operation conducted on December 1. According to pro-government journalists, it was 'the first operation conducted following the flow of intelligence from the US.' Some TV channels, who have been reporting on a potential CBO for weeks, stressed their correctness with pride. However, when we glance at the foreign press, we see completely different reporting. According to the New York Times, the Washington Post and others, what happened on December 1 was not any different than previous operations. Foreign newspapers carried statements from Iraqi sources that denied the attacks. While Turkish TV channels make fun of those who claimed it would not be possible to launch an operation during winter, the Washington Post reports that a military officer from the region agreed that winter was not a good time to launch an operation. A high ranked officer from the southeast told Reuters that 'winter conditions don't allow for a major land operation. Possible operations in the future will be limited to air strikes and artillery fires.' I am not criticizing the Turkish Military for conducting limited operations during winter, or the politicians who have 'snow policies.' I am irritated by the timing

of the operation. Why did the government authorize the military 47 days after the resolution passed the Parliament? Why was the government so late to take action, why?"

Muharrem Sarikaya commented in the mainstream Sabah (12/4):

"Following the Turkish General Staff (TGS) statement on the CBO conducted on December 1, a high level official from the Kurdish Regional Administration's Peshmerge Ministry said that 'there was no reference in Iraqi Patrol Command reports that Turkish troops crossed the border on December 1. The operation might have taken place in the no man's land and the restricted zone that is not under our control'. With this information, northern Iraqi Kurdish officials, for the first time, referred to a 'no man's land and a restricted zone.' As a matter of fact, on June 8th, Turkey designated part of the territory as a military zone and restricted access to this area. Now, there is a similar zone in Northern Iraq as well. This means that Turkey is fulfilling its desire to establish a buffer zone along the border. I asked the deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek yesterday to comment on the zone. Cicek said 'the Turkish military knows the region well and will do whatever is needed' and added that Turkey has agreed on many issues with the Baghdad Administration. Turkey wants to push terrorism out of its borders. That is the point where we are now and the rest is detail."

Kurdish Conference in Brussels

All papers report the "EU, Turkey and the Kurds" conference held in the European Parliament in Brussels, in which former Kurdish lawmaker Leyla Zana, the pro-Kurdish DTP leader Nurettin Demirtas, DTP deputy Ahmet Turk, Nobel Peace Prize-winning Iranian lawyer Shirin Ebadi, South African cleric Desmond Tutu, Professor Noam Chomsky, and MEP Joost Lagendijk participated. Mainstream Hurriyet, Sabah, and Vatan report Zana said a "comprehensive agreement with

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Abdullah Ocalan" was essential for unity and peace in Turkey. Ahmet Turk asked for a "special status" for the Kurds in Turkey, and like DTP leader Demirtas, called for no further Turkish operations into northern Iraq. Lagendijk, co-chairman of Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Commission, urged the PKK to lay down arms "unconditionally," and the DTP to distance itself from the PKK. Islamist oriented Zaman and Yeni Safak say Zana's "Ocalan propaganda" angered Lagendijk. Meanwhile, papers also report Ahmet Gulabi Dere, a PKK member sought by Interpol, joined the conference. Two weeks ago, papers reported that Turkey asked Belgium to extradite Dere on terrorism charges.

Bakoyannis Gives Friendly Messages on Eve of Babacan Visit

Mainstream Milliyet carries an exclusive interview with Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis on the eve of her visit with Turkish counterpart Ali Babacan. "We extend our hand to Turkey; now it's time to forget the past," she said. Bakoyannis also urged Turkey to exert efforts to protect regional stability, stressing the importance of preserving Iraq's territorial integrity. She reiterated that Greece was definitely against a division in Cyprus. "There are 35,000 Turkish troops in Cyprus while the international community can't find 12,000 soldiers for Lebanon," Bakoyannis said. She reiterated that Turkey's EU membership would boost regional peace, stability and welfare. Bakoyannis noted Foreign Minister Ali Babacan would visit not only Athens, but also Western Thrace. "Turks in Western Thrace study Turkish language in school and enjoy special quotas in universities and in the public sector. This is the European way for dealing with minorities," she emphasized. Bakoyannis also underlined Turkey's reluctance to recognize the ecumenical status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and to reopen the Halki Seminary in Istanbul. The Greek FM said the Patriarch, a Turkish citizen, would promote Turkey abroad and added that the recognition of his status would offer a fine example in meeting the EU criteria.

Poll: The Number of Women wearing Headscarves Increases in Turkey

Mainstream Milliyet carries the second part of a survey on "Religion, secularism and turban in Turkey" conducted by "Konda" company, which shows that the rate of women covering their heads for religious reasons has risen to 73 percent, up from 63.4 percent in 2003. Those believing female public servants should cover their

heads increased to 68.9 percent this year, up from 62.6 percent in 2003. Analysts say the AKP administration is responsible for the increase.

Wilson: PKK is the Enemy, not Turkey's Ethnic Kurds
Mainstream Hurriyet reports Ambassador Ross Wilson statement on the embassy website regarding US policy on the Kurds, "We are focused on working with our Turkish allies and partners in Iraq against a violent, terrorist enemy. However, it should be made clear that the PKK is the enemy - not Turkey's ethnic Kurds, nor any other ethnic group in this diverse country."

TV Highlights
NTV, 7.00 A.M.

Domestic News

- Turkey's Civil Aviation General Directorate said there is no evidence of sabotage in Friday's plane crash in Isparta, in which 50 passengers and seven crew members were killed. The first report on the crash says the plane deviated from its route, but the reason was unclear.

- The chairman of parliamentary constitutional commission, AKP deputy Professor Burhan Kuzu, said the new constitution would allow girls wearing headscarves in universities.

- Center right DP leader Mehmet Agar said his party will hold an extraordinary convention on January 6 and former parliament speaker

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Husamettin Cindoruk will run for party leadership.

- The Dutch-Turkish company Multi Turkmall will spend 120 million Euro to build a shopping mall in the mainly Kurdish southeastern city of Diyarbakir.

International News

- President Abdullah Gul, on an official visit to Pakistan, praised Pakistan's moves toward democracy.

- The Orthodox Church in south Cyprus is to reportedly develop a plan for resolving problems on the divided island.

- On Monday, Israel released 429 Palestinian prisoners, a gesture meant to bolster Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

WILSON